Joshua 9:15-10:8 | Sunday November 8, 2026

The people of the Promised Land have heard what happened at both Jericho and Ai, and they are ready to unify and fight against the Israelites. The Gibeonites chose a different strategy. They chose to deceive Israel and pretend that they lived in a far distant country. Their goal was to get Israel to enter into a covenant with them so that they would not be destroyed with the rest of the people of the Promised Land. Joshua and Israel were careful to ask the right questions and even knew the correct scripture to apply. Yet, they still made a mistake in agreeing to a peace treaty with the Gibeonites. Verse 14 lets us know why they failed.

Joshua 9:14-15 ESV

> (14) So the men took some of their provisions, **but did not ask counsel from the LORD.**
> (15) **And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them**, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

Prayer is so important to living the Spirit-filled life. Prayer draws us into a fellowship with God. Joshua needed spiritual insight, and seeking counsel from God was the only way to receive it. We are just as dependent on needing spiritual insight, so we should be consistently seeking God in prayer. Without God's wisdom, Joshua and Israel made a peace treaty with their neighbors, and this treaty will have immediate consequences.

Joshua 9:16-18 ESV

> (16) At the end of **three days** after they had made a covenant with them, **they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them.**
> (17) **And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day**. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.
> (18) **But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders.**

Three days is all it took for Israel to hear rumors that the Gibeonites lied. Then it took another three days to confirm the deception. **So often when we pray, God has us wait**. If Israel and Joshua would have only waited a few days, the lies could have been seen through. The Gibeonites were not from a distant country but lived a little over 20 miles away. The nation is understandably upset about this treaty that was made. What worsened it is that when the scouts reached Gibeon on the third day, they found out what kind of city it really was.

Joshua 10:2 ESV

> (2) he feared greatly, because **Gibeon was a great city**, **like one of the royal cities**, **and because it was greater than Ai,** and all its men were warriors.

Gibeon was a massive city, larger and grander than anything else Israel had conquered up to that point. **This foolish treaty cost the Israelites a tremendous amount of plunder**. They had enjoyed all that they took from Ai, and these Gibeonite cities had even more to offer. Yet, now that Israel made this foolish treaty, they could not destroy the Gibeonites and could not enjoy the spoil that would come from these cities. Israel was still God's people, and **yet they missed out on rich blessings that God had for them because of their sin.** This is a principle all throughout God's Word.

Exodus 12:36 ESV

(36) And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. **Thus they plundered the Egyptians**.

Exodus 32:4 ESV

(4) **And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf**. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

God blessed Israel by having them plunder the Egyptians as they came out of Egypt. The Israelites walked out of Egypt wealthy. Then beneath Mount Siani, as the mountain was still on fire with the presence of God, Israel melted their gold earrings and rings down to make the golden calf. **Their rewards were exchanged for sin**. The prodigal son did the same thing.

Luke 15:12-13 ESV

(12) And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, **give me the share of property** that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them.
(13) Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and **there he squandered his property in reckless living.**

The son took his inheritance, the blessing of being in his father’s family, and exchanged it for the temporary enjoyment of sin**. As believers, our sin does not undo our standing or relationship with God.** Israel was still God’s chosen people. The prodigal was still a son of the Father. Yet, our sin cost us the rewards that God has for us. This is why Paul was so focused on living for the eternal rewards that God had for Him.

1 Corinthians 9:23-27 ESV

(23) I do it all for the sake of the gospel, **that I may share with them in its blessings.**
(24) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, **but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.**
(25) Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, **but we an imperishable.**
(26) So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.
(27) But I **discipline** my body and **keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others **I myself should be disqualified.**

Paul wanted to partake of the blessings of the gospel. He wanted to walk in the eternal things that God had for him. He wanted to receive eternal, imperishable prizes. Since this was his motivation, he disciplined his body, which means **to bring something to submission by constant annoyance, to wear down.** Paul knew how active and intentional he needed to be in his walk with Christ because his flesh was constantly pulling toward what is earthly. He sought to make his body his slave so that he would not be disqualified. Paul was not worried about losing his salvation, and he was not worried that he was never saved in the first place. **"Disqualified" carries the idea of being unfit/unqualified for any good deed (Titus 1:16); it is also used of barren soil (Heb 6:8).** Not walking in a fellowship with God costs us the eternal fruit that God wanted to produce in us. Joshua and Israel did not consult God, so they lost out on the plunder of Gibeon. **Walking in the wisdom of our flesh will always cost us the eternal blessings from walking in the Spirit.**

Joshua 9:19-26 ESV

(19) But all the leaders said to all the congregation, **“We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them.**
(20) This we will do to them: **let them live**, **lest wrath be upon us,** because of the oath that we swore to them.”
(21) And the leaders said to them, “**Let them live.” So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.**
(22) Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, **“Why did you deceive us,** saying, ‘We are very far from you,’ when you dwell among us?
(23) **Now therefore you are cursed,** and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.”
(24) They answered Joshua, “Because **it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded** his servant Moses to give you all the land **and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you**—so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing.
(25) And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it.”
(26) **So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them.**

The Israelites were so upset they were ready to kill the Gibeonites. The treaty was made under false pretenses, and Israel was ready to take all the plunder that was supposed to be theirs. **Yet Joshua and the leaders of Israel knew that breaking an oath was sin.** The oath was in the name of the Lord and should not be broken. The leaders knew that they had sinned in not consulting God and **rightly understood the best course of action was to walk in a fellowship with God in the very next decision**. They needed to honor their oath. **One sin should not become two or three**. They were God’s people and made the oath in God’s name. They were called to walk as people of integrity because of whom they belonged, even as the Gibeonites had not walked in integrity.

Colossians 3:9-10 ESV

(9) **Do not lie to one another**, seeing that **you have put off the old self** with its practices
(10) **and have put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

As believers, we have put on the new life in Jesus. Our actions are to reflect that. Our word is to reflect that. Our society overvalues words in the sense that what someone says is often more important than their actions. Then at the same time, devalues words when lying is called "spin," and there is no accountability for what someone says. We are to reflect Christ and speak the truth. Our word is to mean something.

God is honored when we live for Him the best we know how in the midst of a tough situation. We are not to let one foolish choice snowball into multiple sins as we try to fix it. The best path is to walk in an integrity and fellowship with God and let Him take care of the details. Even though Israel was responding well to their mistake, they still had to deal with the consequences of their actions. We can be fully forgiven in God’s eyes for our sin and walk in fellowship with Him and still face the earthly results and consequences of our sinful actions.

Forgiveness does not mean elimination of earthly consequences.

Joshua 10:1-5 ESV

> (1) As soon as Adoni-zedek, **king of Jerusalem**, heard how Joshua had captured Ai and had devoted it to destruction, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and how **the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them,**
> (2) **he feared greatly**, because **Gibeon was a great city**, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, **and all its men were warriors.**
> (3) So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham **king of Hebron**, to Piram **king of Jarmuth**, to Japhia **king of Lachish**, and to Debir **king of Eglon**, saying,
> (4) "**Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon**. For it has made peace with Joshua and with the people of Israel."
> (5) **Then the five kings of the Amorites**, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and **encamped against Gibeon and made war against it**.

With this new treaty with the Gibeonites, Israel has started getting too close to Jerusalem for Adoni-zedek's comfort and knows the cities need to band together to stand against this new threat. Adoni-zedek creates a coalition with 4 other kings of southern cities in the Promised Land. Yet, instead of directly attacking Israel, they attack the Gibeonites. Adoni-Zedek wants to set a precedent for all the other people of the Promised Land that making a treaty with Israel is treasonous and will be viewed as a threat. The Gibeonites respond by relying on their new ally.

Joshua 10:6-7 ESV

> (6) And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. **Come up to us quickly and save us and help us**, **for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us."**
> (7) So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

Israel now had to defend a people that originally they should have been destroying. Their foolish choice had immediate consequences. Instead of continuing the attacks in the Promised Land city by city, Israel was going to face a unified enemy. Yet, God is so gracious and faithful. Israel is walking in truth and upholding their mistaken peace treaty, and God will honor them for this.

Joshua 10:8 ESV

> (8) And the LORD said to Joshua, "**Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands**. Not a man of them shall stand before you."

Even after Joshua and Israel failed to consult God, He still loves and works on behalf of His people. **God does not abandon them** as they have responded well to their mistake and are upholding the oath they made in God's name. Our God is so gracious to us. **In His grace, God honors a treaty that was never meant to happen.** Instead of telling Israel that this was their mess and they had to figure it out for themselves, He continued to be faithful to His promises. **Israel was walking in fellowship with God, and He was willing to fight with them to defend the Gibeonites.** In a way only God could; this battle against the 5 kings of the Amorites will also accomplish God's own will of taking over more of the Promised Land. God is so faithful even when we are not. It is amazing that over **400 years later** God is still upholding this ill-conceived peace

treaty with the Gibeonites.

2 Samuel 21:1-3 ESV

> (1) Now there was a famine in the days of **David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD.** And the LORD said, “There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, **because he put the Gibeonites to death.”**
> (2) So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.
> (3) And David said to the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? **And how shall I make atonement, that you may bless the heritage of the LORD?”**

Time does not undo God’s promises and His faithfulness. God did not forget the covenant Israel made in His name. Saul violated it, and Israel was disciplined with a famine for his actions. As the famine got worse, David sought God for wisdom. Israel needed to be faithful to their promise because God was still upholding it.

Our sin makes life so complicated, and it can bring so many consequences. The answer is always the same: we are to confess and walk in a fellowship with our faithful God. **God is showing His tremendous character by being faithful to the lying deceitful Gibeonites.** He is a God that, while just, brings restoration and beauty out of a disastrous situation.

Joshua 9:23; 27 ESV

> (23) **Now therefore you are cursed,** and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water **for the house of my God.”**
>
> (27) But Joshua made them that day **cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD**, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

The Gibeonites were cursed to slavery because of their deceitfulness to the Israelites. They were given the laborious task of providing wood and water to the tabernacle and future temple. **While there was a curse in this, God made it into a blessing in that the Gibeonites were exposed to the things of God**.

1 Chronicles 16:39 ESV

> (39) And he left Zadok the priest and his brothers the priests **before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that was at Gibeon**

For a time the tabernacle was set up in Gibeon, and eventually it even became a city for the Levites (Josh 21:10; 17). Through this, the Gibeonites were saved and became worshippers of the one true God. We know this because we notice who is mentioned years later when Israel came out of exile and started to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 3:7 ESV

> (7) And next to them **repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite** and Jadon the Meronothite**, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah**, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River.

The Gibeonites were a people who were to be destroyed. Yet as the result of a foolish peace treaty, God not only preserved them but can also bring redemption. These deceitful cheating people

became worshipers. They were not destroyed by Israel, or Assyria, or even Babylon but worshipped God and even helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. God was faithful to Israel to work on their behalf even when they made a foolish treaty. God was faithful to the Gibeonites who lied and cheated. We can trust God to be faithful to us.

Lamentations 3:21-23 ESV

> (21) **But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:**
> (22) **The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases**; His mercies never come to an end;
> (23) they are new every morning; **great is Your faithfulness.**
